Liberty

NOT THE DAUGHTER BUT THE MOTHER OF ORDER — PROUDHON

Vol. VII.—No. 20. BOSTON, MASS., SATURDAY, JANUARY 24, 1891. Whole No. 176.

"For always in thine eyes, O Liberty!
Shines that high light whereby the world is saved;
And though thou slay us, we will trust in thee."

JOHN HAY.

On Picket Duty.

"Fair Play," after a suspension of several months, comes to this office from its new quarters in Sioux City, Iowa, in a new and very much improved form. Hereafter it will be published monthly. I feared it had disappeared forever, and I am delighted at its revival. It is one of the few journals that are consistently Anarchistic, and therefore deserves a much heartier support than it is likely ever to obtain.

The willingness of most Trades Unionists and their organs to coöperate with the forces of superstition for the compulsory observance of Sunday, in order to secure more leisure for the workers of certain trades, affords an illustration of what individual freedom will be under State Socialism. It is pleasant to be able to note an exception in the case of the Pittsburg "Commoner and Glass Worker," which takes strong ground against all Sunday legislation.

I am in receipt of a prospectus from Edward Bellamy announcing that he is to start in Boston a weekly Nationalistic organ to be called "The New Nation." I predict a considerable success for it during one, two, or three years, after which it will flatten out of sight. A friend of mine, who allows it two years of prosperity, when asked why he selected that period, answered: "It probably will take one year for the editors to say all that they have to say, and another year for the subscribers to find out that they have finished saying it."

The "Religio-Philosophical Journal" of Chicago has the reputation of being the most illiberal of the Spiritualistic journals, but, judging from a recent experience of mine, it compares very favorably in this respect with the "Banner of Light." I offered a paid advertisement of Tolstoï's "Fruits of Culture" to both papers. The advertisement said simply this: "Every Spiritualist will want to read what Count Tolstoï has to say about Spiritualism in his new book, 'The Fruits of Culture.'" The "Religio-Philosophical Journal" printed it, but the "Banner of Light" rejected it. Evidently the proprietors of the "Banner" are afraid to have their readers become familiar with the anti-Spiritualistic view.

The Pennsylvania Supreme Court has used the following expression in a recent decision: "The United States has the paramount right to declare what goods are merchantable and what regulations of their sales are reasonable." Calling attention to this, the Galveston "News" remarks: "If this means that the United States has the right to declare any article not merchantable it cuts a wide swathe. Of course, if the courts sustain Congress and Congress exercises a certain power, there is no remedy. People may feel sure that no such scope of authority was intended, but what does private opinion signify?" The pessimism of the "News" arouses sympathy; but it is not true that private opinion signifies nothing. In discussing social changes and movements, the "historical faculty" contributes powerfully to a right appreciation of events and factors. Social progress is not a myth, and private human beings are not mere puppets. Let "private opinion" be duly directed, and courts and governments and officials will all be taken care of.

A certain, or rather, an uncertain E. Evans contributes to the Washington "National View" some selected epigrams from the writings of Frances E. Willard, at the end of which he says: "But the burden of her message and the climax of her thought is most beautifully portrayed in the closing verses of *her* wonderful and pathetic poem entitled 'What We Want.'" The lines are then quoted, and on examination prove to be identical with the last four verses of the poem "For the People," written many years ago for the New York "Independent" by James Jeffrey Roche, John Boyle O'Reilly's successor as editor of the "Pilot." Liberty reprinted the whole poem at the time. You see now, Mr. Yarros, how wrong you were recently in claiming that two persons cannot write the same quatrain. Here not only four lines, but sixteen, are composed absolutely word for word by two poets separately. For you will not tell me that, if Miss Willard claims this poem, she lies. You certainly do not wish to fall with me under the condemnation of Mr. Pentecost as lacking in chivalry.

Here is what the New York "Times" editorially said in welcome of Atkinson's recent financial proposal: "The principle that we regard as of the highest value in this proposed system is the combined independence and responsibility of the banks as the agencies of the business community for conducting credit exchanges. In other words, the task is left to those most deeply interested in performing it, and the consequences of its right or wrong performance falling directly upon them, the best possible security for its being well done is obtained. . . . The advantages of the issue are to be judged by those who take its risks and must meet them. The community using the issues from day to day could hardly have a firmer, sounder, more immediate, and constant assurance that, on the one hand, the issues shall be sufficient, and on the other, that they shall not be excessive. That mistakes would be made, and even that abuses would occur, is only to say that men who become bankers do not lose their human nature when they enter on their occupation. But the mistakes or abuses of one association directly threaten the interests of the rest, and become immediately apparent to the rest, and by the very operation of the selfishness which, unrestrained, produces them in a limited circle, they are checked and corrected in the wider circles that they affect. With this concentration of power in the hands of those who are, as a body, most deeply concerned in its proper exercise, there must disappear that gravest of all business evils, reliance upon Government help. A situation at once absurd and mischievous is put in the way of abolition. The regulation of the credit currency, which is now within the control of some four hundred men, not a half dozen of whom are selected for any fitness to deal with such a problem, and who have not the slightest direct responsibility for their acts, who do not and cannot be made to suffer consciously for any error, and who are open to all sorts of temptation to do wrong, is placed in the power of men who have the deepest interest in right action and who must suffer directly for any wrongdoing. That would seem to be a policy of common sense. It would, however, be a revolution as great as it would be beneficent." If Atkinson's incomplete and timid and faulty measure has called forth such enthusiasm, what may we not expect from the "Times" when it hears of the complete, safe, secure, and simple plan of mutual banking, — that is, if its enthusiasm is honest and its intelligence equal to the task of appreciating the superiority of mutual banking. Meanwhile, as an earnest of future usefulness, the "Times" ought to come out squarely in favor of free banking. Now that it has committed itself to the position that government interference with finance is mischievous, it cannot consistently defend the ten per cent. tax and the other legal obstacles in the path of financial improvement.

When a man begins to talk loudly about "financial fallacies," you may bet a hundred to one that he is about to utter one himself. For this reason, when I lately saw those words at the beginning of an editorial in the "Voice," I was prepared to find the following further down the column: "The demand of the Farmers' Alliance that the Government lend money at two per cent. interest on non-perishable farm products and real estate fails to stand cross-examination. Where is the Government to get money to lend? It must get it from its people, or else turn the printing presses to work and lend mere printed paper which represents nothing." Represents nothing! Why, by the hypothesis it represents either non-perishable farm products or real estate. But, continues the editor, "if the Government is to do that at the mere cost of running the presses, why should it stop with its loans at any one class? The publishers of the 'Voice' have a large number of non-perishable books on hand; why should they not receive loans on them at two per cent.?" Sure enough; admitting the premise, why not? "Why should not the printing presses keep at work until every man who has anything non-perishable gets a loan on it at two per cent.?" Again I see no objection, except that such a rate of interest is needlessly high. "And why stop even there? Why stop the presses at all until every man in the nation has without interest all the money he can find room for, and then we can all quit work and live on our income!" Here a halt must be called. This last leap doesn't satisfy the conditions. The presses must stop on reaching the men without security to offer, because paper issued to them would in fact "represent nothing." With the function performed by collateral the editor of the "Voice" is evidently unfamiliar. He probably cannot see why a pawnbroker may not as safely lend money to a man without an overcoat as to one who has an overcoat and is willing to "hang it up." I know no financial fallacy more absurd than that. The editor gives evidence also that he would not be a greater success as a practical than as a theoretical financier. Think of offering Funk & Wagnalls' books as non-perishable security for a loan! Why, if I were a banker, and Messrs. Funk & Wagnalls were to ask me to advance them on their books more than seventy-five per cent. of the value of the white paper to the junk-dealer, I would say to them: "Gentlemen, I cherish a fond hope that in a not distant future there will be no further demand for Rev. Mr. Fernald's 'Economics of Prohibition,' or Rev. T. DeWitt Talmage's 'Pathway of Life,' or Bishop Vincent's 'Studies in Young Life,' or Rev. Wilbur F. Crafts' 'Reading the Bible with Relish,' or even General Booth's 'In Darkest England'; and, lest this hope may speedily be realized, I must decline to consider these works as non-perishable products fit to serve as security for a loan. I fear that paper issued against these would soon 'represent nothing.'"

Proudhon, the Father of Anarchism.

HIS PERSONALITY AND HIS PHILOSOPHY.

[From Dr. S. Engländer's "Abolition of the State."*]

The true human individual finds no place in the State, he can call no place in it his home, and feels himself as in the nursery, ruled by the fears of bogies and the rod. State apparatus is antiquated; mankind will no longer be governed, and will pay no more government taxes. The fearfully tragic side of the State has been long since symbolized in the antique tragedies. Shakspere represented the madness of royalty and the disintegration of the State; and in the classical masterpiece of Hebbel, "Herodes and Marianne," the contradiction attaching to a kingdom as such, and how thereby every royal person, even the noblest, is morally annihilated, is artistically delineated.

But every kingdom is royal, and every State a kingdom. The form of State is strong, iron, oppressive; it kills the individual, and is incompatible with liberty. Every one of us digs himself out; we are all under the heap. The State has been for us as has been the mother's body for the embryo; now mankind frees itself from it. Only by an aberration of reason will government be retained.

To Proudhon belongs the merit of having pointed out to us the way to abolish the State and to organize Anarchy. The first words he spoke to society sounded from a small provincial town, and penetrated to the Sorbonne at Paris. They were these, "Property is robbery." With this bitter warning he began his public life. It was to Blanqui senior, the Professor of Economic Science, who from his pulpit in Paris defended modern society, that he spoke these enigmatical and often misinterpreted words.

Prior to this work on property he had published a pamphlet on the celebration of the Sabbath. In this, however, he did not thunder forth in his later and more violent style, but ever and anon he would throw aside his theological cloak which he were to compete for the prize offered by the Academy of Besançon, and we see his naked form. Once, as if he were softly talking to himself, while speaking of quite other subjects, this sentence escaped him: "Property has not yet had its martyrs; it is the last of the false gods." These words are hidden amidst reflections on Moses and the celebration of the Sabbath. They stand there as a wolf in the sheepfold.

When Proudhon came to Paris he was so poor that he performed the entire journey from Besançon on foot, not having money enough to pay for a seat even in the poorest conveyance; he brought nothing with him but a definition. He had invented a definition of property analyzing the foundation of society. And in this formula he pointed out the entire change which property had undergone since the commencement of commercial intercourse and credit; and by so doing he at the same time so clearly showed the one great change society had undergone, and also discovered, as it were, the pin around which the thread of the future must be wound. With this definition he so sharpened the social thought of the age that with it he could not but inflict wounds.

So harshly, in so concentrated a manner, did he express his definition of property that he irritated and gave occasion to many misunderstandings. He, the great opponent of Communism, laid himself open, by his definition of "property is robbery," to the charge of being a Communist. And yet Proudhon had never attacked property, so far as it was the product of toil, invention, or labor; but he showed that it only possessed value so far as it entered into the circle of exchange. In his definition, however, he had in view only the feudal form of property, an object which, without any exertion of its owner, brings to that owner interest or rent. In this definition he found the spell which must open the door to the social revolution; in this definition the great plot of ancient society was laid bare. It was the declaration of war which the advancing February revolution sent on before it. It was the eye of Socialism, the justification of reform, the first word of the coming age, the first Republican thought.

Proudhon knew, too, what point he gave to the coming revolution by his declaration. He said: "The definition of property is mine, and it is my whole ambition to prove that I have understood its meaning and scope. Property is robbery. A thousand years hence such a word will never be spoken twice. I have no other estate on earth but this definition of property, but to my thinking it is more valuable than the millions of Rothschild, and I venture to say that it will be the most important event in the reign of Louis Philippe."

This pride in the new formula proves that in it the Revolution already raised its head, and the monopoly of capital as well as the principle of government was disintegrated.

He called property robbery, because in its present form the idea of rec[illegible]y is wanting; and he could, although he was the gr[illegible]opponent of Communism, yet speak of an abolition of [illegible] because he deprived it of its sting, and only allowed [illegible] exist without it, just as a man no longer exists as a man when deprived of his manhood.

Proudhon's abolition of property was only a progressive abolition of interest on capital, without expropriation or the slightest Communistic tendency. If under the word property the right of enjoying the full benefit of one's own labor is understood, he only abolishes false to reinstate true property. Usury is equally only naked property, capital unveiled, the torch held up to society. All property is usurious, there is no property in circulation but has a usurious advantage. Every proprietor is a usurer, aye, even against his will; and this usury of property Proudhon called a robbery.

In his definition of property lay his whole criticism of society, which at one and the same moment inflicts a wound and heals it. Proudhon's criticism of society served to allot to property its place in the economic series, beyond which it is incomprehensible. In his two first works on property he criticised the conception of it by antithesis and sought to attack its present feudal form by the contradictions which, he pointed out, lay in its very nature.

But it was only first in his *chef d'œuvre*, "The Philosophy of Misery," that he entered upon the path which could lead to a synthetic solution. He sought out the analogous and adequate phenomena under which property was ranged, in order to investigate its nature and its economical relations. Apart from these relations, property appeared, by the logical constructions in which Proudhon placed it, as a separate fact, a solitary idea, and therefore incomprehensible and unproductive. But if property assumes its true form and be treated within its own range as a harmonious whole, it loses its negative specialities.

To arrive at this comprehension of property, to the idea of social order, he first lays down the series of contradictions of which property forms a part, and then gives as a general rule the positive formula of the series.

By this logical process Proudhon so transforms property that it becomes a real, positive, and social idea, a property which abolishes former property, and is beneficial to all. The whole problem is thus critically treated by him without any sentimentality; he reduces all Socialism to a calculation, and by this formal act, which we will more specially consider, arrives at the transformation of society. Capital, says Proudhon, has subdued property, and labor must subdue capital.

This battle with capital pervades all the writings of Proudhon. He encompasses it, he undermines it, he strangles it with its own hands. He is the deadly foe of capital, because property is never more hurtful to labor than when it appears in the form of capital. Capital has of itself a creative power; it works quite independently of the capitalist while he sleeps. It is influential even when inactive; aye, its influence even continues when it is hidden away and buried.

Capital is labor grown into a parvenu; and, as an upstart is hardest upon his former companions, so capital, which represents concentrated labor, is most severe upon labor. It not only devours the fruit of labor, but it anticipates it, and in every phase it hangs on it like a consuming sickness.

Capital is of a cannibal nature. The capitalist may be the noblest philanthropist, but under the present economic arrangements of society he has no free-will in reference to his capital. The action of capital upon labor resembles that of the butcher who fattens the lamb he destines for slaughter. The support capital bestows upon labor is the more pernicious inasmuch as apparently it is beneficial. On the one hand, the influence of capital upon labor is as creative and invigorating as light upon plants. Everything that is great and beautiful in labor emanates from capital. Yet, on the other hand, it acts as fire upon wood.

Socialism is not hostile to capital, — in it it sees the blessing of labor; but it fights against interest on capital, which robs labor of all the salutary effects it derives from it. The productivity of capital is to annihilate. The rebellion of Socialism against capital consists only in this tendency, and this was strongly prominent in Proudhon.

To abolish interest on capital, to place the workman in such a position that he may always be able unhindered to find the means of production, to make work dependent only on itself, to establish facility of interchange of products, and gratuitous and mutual credit, were the Socialist ideas which led Proudhon to a "People's Bank." The "People's Bank," had it been realized, would have been the retort for the distillation of society. It was not to be a means of organization, but of destruction. While other Socialists sought in vain to organize labor, Proudhon in the "Banque du Peuple" found the means to free it from its chains.

Proudhon is free. In the development and comprehension of his liberty consists the presentation and conception of his revolutionary character. He is a free man, and possesses all the sublimity, grandeur, pride, and egotism which accompany independence and solitude. Never did he ally himself to a party; he knew no other guide but the internal instinct he possessed to further his own development. For him there were no other laws but those of his own nature. His love of liberty was so boundless that it verged on obstinacy. It irked him to have a companion, since a companion might acquire an influence over him. So often, therefore, as any one pursued the same path as he, he tore himself roughly away, and preferred to seek his goal by a circuitous route. Even the propaganda of his ideas received thus a peculiar character.

"I will neither be ruled nor rule," he once said. This egotism went so far that he did not even trouble himself about his disciples or his public. All his works are monologues. This even had great influence on his political writings.

At the moment of the scientific contest he felt himself, as it were, fastened to his antagonist, and this made his refutations so hasty, so coarse, even at times so venomous. He ended every controversy by tearing himself away from his antagonist. Only when he had broken off the controversy, and once more stood solitary, did he feel his pulse throb freely, powerfully, and full of life. His feelings then were as one who had loosed himself from a corpse to which he had been chained.

Most remarkable in this respect was his controversial interchange of letters with the only economist who waged an honorable war with him — Bastiat. We see in their correspondence how wearisome was the vicinity of Bastiat to Proudhon. Every letter is concluded with an expressed hope that it may be the last, and the following one is visibly commenced with an effort. Suddenly he tears himself away from Bastiat, and all at once concludes the contest; and his last words are, "M. Bastiat, you are a dead man!"

Proudhon was so impetuous a defender of liberty that he was horrified at everything which restrains the liberty of the individual, even for his own benefit. He would have no mechanical, but an organic bond of society. He would have man amid the turmoil of life preserve his solitariness, the source of all great things; and he knew no more beautiful picture than the skiff which, guided by a single man, is tossed about upon the seething ocean.

Even labor was with him synonymous with individual liberty. "When you speak of organized labor," he said in one of his pamphlets, "it is exactly as if you undertook to gouge out the eyes of liberty."

He would have had liberty for himself, for his antagonists, for the world. He fought the battle with bitterness, but he turned away shudderingly from the weapon of reaction. Had in his time the Jesuits and Ultramontanes fallen, he would have initiated no reaction against them. Refutation alone, not suppression, appeared to him human; and he alone was in his view revolutionary who held unbounded liberty as the principle of revolution.

Thus it was that he showed himself most sublime when the Procureur-General proposed his arrest on account of an article he had written. A motion for permission to prosecute him was brought into the National Assembly, and he then spoke, concluding with these words: "Citizens! I await the decision of the Assembly without the least disquietude, since I am one of those who may be refuted but not punished!"

Everything that Proudhon proposed in reference to the mutual relations of mankind emanated from this ardent adoration of liberty. He would have had each man do as much service for his fellow-man as his fellow-man did for him — not more, not less. It is from this love of liberty that his writings were pervaded by such a hatred of privileges. His thirst for liberty caused him to rebel against all and everything, even against himself. It is on this account that his "Confessions of a Revolutionist" is one of the most remarkable books we possess. Never were such brave words spoken by a prisoner. We stand before the bars of his cell and listen to his words, and we envy him his liberty. He is in the power of the Government, and calmly proves that it has poison in its veins and must fall. In his narrow cell he annihilates the idea of government and the rent of capital — all the bases of ancient society. He crumbles up the world to nothing, stands triumphantly on the universal ruin, breaks out into an ironical song of praise, and mocks at himself and everything else.

After he has thus, as it were, subterraneously undermined and blown everything into the air, suddenly he comes forth into the clear cheerful daylight of irony; but the irony never spares its own work, and mocks at all existing things.

Having annihilated governmentalism and capital, he praises irony as the only true liberty. In his solitude he concludes with sublime laughter which is understood by few.

To be continued.

*Continued from No. 175.

The World Is Bankrupt.

[Boston Transcript.]

"All the world is bankrupt, I tell you, except Rothschild, the Bank of England, and — me," said a financier yesterday afternoon, as the conversation ran upon the embarrassment of Baring Brothers. "Where is the government, the bank, or the man that has enough money to pay his or its debts? Certainly, take them all together, they haven't enough to pay all their debts. Yes, the world is bankrupt."

But presently he went on:

"However, bankruptcy is the nominal condition of commerce. Solvency is only a sort of commercial truce, and panic is merely the resumption of hostilities. The interesting thing about the situation in London is that there seems to be a new kind of general consent to the continuance of the truce at all costs. The generals of the financial war, for once, are able to restrain their subordinates, the privates, from flying at one another's throats. It is well. There will be no panic. The period of universal liquidation is post-

poned by several years. I tell you — and I have something of a reputation as a prophet — the next great panic will be the most terrific that the world has ever seen. I should not wonder if it would be postponed for more than ten years. But when it comes it will look, sure enough, as if all the world were bankrupt.

"As the result of it, those who live well into the second decade of the twentieth century will see commerce and industry beginning over again on a new basis. Everything then will be sold for its actual value; yes, not a cent more will any merchant or manufacturer obtain for his wares than the true cost value. But how will commerce live at all, then, you ask, without profits as an incentive to dealers? Let me answer the question by asking another: What is commerce but an exchange of commodities? And if I can exchange my superfluous products, at the cost value to me, for the products of another which I want more than I want mine, at their cost value to him, have I not all the incentive that I need? And what is the reason that commerce might not be carried on, on a large scale, without the cumbersome actual bartering of goods, but still upon the basis of cost, by the aid of a medium of exchange that is simply an agreed representative of this same actual cost value of products — each man, as it were, putting his products into the bank, of which everybody is a member, and taking out of it the currency which is its value, and getting what he needs with it? This would practically turn the whole community into a mutual bank; with no chance, however, for loss of confidence, panics, and liquidation, because nothing whatever would then be based upon confidence, and there would be nothing to liquidate. All our panics are the result of fictitious values; and as long as we have fictitious values, with a certain number of people getting them and a great many more people paying them, just so surely shall we store up for ourselves periodical conditions of general bankruptcy, followed by painful and costly liquidation."

Powderly Manfully Rebuked.

[Pittsburg Commoner and Glass Worker.]

The "Journal of the Knights of Labor," in commenting on an editorial published in these columns some time ago on the Sunday question, says that we are going too fast. Last week it quoted us as follows:

Why can't Pittsburg workingmen pass resolutions declaring it to be a man's natural right to do as he sees fit on Sunday, and why can't workingmen all over the country do the same?

It then proceeds to say:

We have no sympathy with the fanatical Sabbatarian spirit which forbids recreation on Sunday, but at the same time we fear that workingmen sometimes, in their indignation at absurd and tyrannical restrictions, commit themselves to positions which, if generally adopted, might bring about a still worse state of subjection. The "Commoner's" notion, for instance, that it is "man's natural right" to do as he pleases on Sunday logically implies the right of the employer to run his store or manufactory seven days of the week, and to make willingness to work on Sunday a condition of employment. This is dangerous ground to take. Sunday laws may be a little irksome in some cases, but at all events they do secure to the worker one day's rest in seven. If this safeguard were abandoned, capitalistic greed would soon make every day in the week a working day.

The "'Commoner's' notion" is just as the "Journal" puts it. We don't see by what acrobatic process of reasoning any one can conclude that a man has a right to fish, play ball, etc., and at the same time has no right to work on Sunday. We are not running away from any question because it is tending on dangerous ground. The more dangerous the ground, the more reason for facing the issue. Workingmen or others will never gain anything by shutting their eyes to facts. Such a course resembles too much the silly ostrich.

To say that it is wrong to pass laws prohibiting recreation on Sunday and, at the same time, to imply that it is right to pass laws to prevent employers from running their shops on Sunday is inconsistent, to say the least, and comports little with logic. We can infer nothing else from the "Journal's" statement than that it is in favor of special legislation, — when that legislation, for instance, benefits the workers. While its motive may be laudable, its reason is lacking. Special legislation is the curse of the age, and is just as deplorable when made for the benefit of workers as for capitalists. By giving consent to special laws in one case the workers have no ground to stand on when complaining of others.

The utter futility of any attempt to prevent employers from asking Sunday labor of their employees is apparent. If custom hadn't decreed otherwise, the law could never have prevented it. Workmen do not want laws to protect them. They want laws repealed that give others an advantage over them. Special legislation has been enacted for the rich and powerful, and, instead of having special laws passed to make up for this, the workers should ask for the repeal of previously-made special laws. The present Sunday laws are made specially for people with more religion than justice in their hearts.

We believe every man has a right to suit himself in the observance of matters herein discussed. There is no law compelling a man to make merry on Sunday, but there is a law that prevents men from making merry. A portion of our population believes it is right to enjoy one's self on Sunday, while others think it is wrong. We grant the latter the right not to make merry, but we deny them the right to prevent us from doing so.

When the State Federation of Labor was in session at Harrisburg last November, the "Press" of this city published an editorial on it, wherein it was stated that the fact had been proven that people could not be made happy through legislation. Take this thought home, pursue it further, and see where it leads.

We reiterate our belief that it is "man's natural right to do as he sees fit on Sunday," or any other day for that matter. Instead of treading on dangerous ground we are only stepping on the most solid *terra firma*. Men must make arrangements to suit themselves. If employers are so sordid as to ask a man to work and drudge seven days a week, why, exercise your natural right, form a trade union, and refuse to work for him. Let him form an employers' union if he doesn't like this, and then, in sporting parlance, "May the best man win." We feel that reason would soon supersede battle in such a case, and matters would be far better arranged than by entrusting our interests to law-makers and wily politicians, who are only able to look after their own interests.

We give space to this question because in our estimation the principle involved is a fundamental and, perhaps, a vital one.

An Egoistic Decision.

[George E. Macdonald in Freethought.]

"Observations" is a department of this paper which I started more for diversion than anything else, and I have continued it as a privilege which I take of inflicting myself upon the reader. I have been kindly borne with, and have even been invited to reappear when I have left myself out for a week or two. I find that people who are not interested in the cause of Freethought discover something to arrest their attention in these "Observations." To an extent — a very slight one — newspaper readers and newspaper men see in this department a more popular vein than I have elsewhere struck; hence has arisen the fact of which I thought to speak when I read Judge Brewer's letter. To cut it short, I a few days since received an invitation to transfer my person and my "Observations" from this office to that of a daily newspaper, where readers and remuneration would be several times multiplied. It is pointed out to me by disinterested persons of good judgment that I may work here until my eyebrows are white, and still have neither money nor reputation, while popular journalism offers both. Other considerations are mentioned, even the old, old fallacy of duty to one and another. I so far remain unconvinced. I recognize as clearly as anybody does that the present work holds out no assured rewards, but I hope it will sometime. I take it that Freethinkers are a trifle more exacting than other readers; which is right, for we should demand that our writers do good work. I also entertain the hope that I may improve to such an extent that my work in this field may be thought worthy of the remuneration it has received or might now receive elsewhere. It was agreeable to me to have the occasional contributions I sent, in former years, to papers of some literary pretensions, accepted and paid for. It is gratifying now to meet with an offer such as I have spoken of; and perhaps some well-wisher may not be displeased at my mentioning it. Our Freethought writers must be judged by the general standard. I hold that they do not suffer by comparison with others outside our ranks, and gladly furnish such testimony as I can to that effect. There is a chance for the introduction of some sentiment in this place. There is opportunity to remark that it is a beautiful sight when devotion to a cause is more powerful than the desire for personal emoluments; but if such is the case it is no more remarkable or worthy of note than the opposite fact. I follow my strongest, and therefore most selfish, inclination, and stick to the text. Be the consequences on my own head.

A Perfect Cure.

To the Editor of Liberty:

It is now a year and a half since I was taken to task in Liberty for ordering Mr. Grant Allen out of the political arena as an intrusive paragrinder. He had been prattling about Individualism and Socialism in a way which showed that he understood neither. I put him into communication with both sides. He heard from the Liberty and Property Defence League, and he heard from the Fabian Society. The result of his education he has now given to the public. He tells us that his reason has been captivated by the Individualists, but that it is not wise to swim against the tide of Socialism. Consequently he has joined the Fabian Society. Reason pulls him one way, Wisdom the other. Mr. Allen's reason and his wisdom have walked into opposite camps, and Mr. Allen himself remains bereft of both. It is clear he cannot walk off in two directions himself. Society and Mr. Allen are both to be congratulated on the result. Society is rid of a political impostor; and the political impostor, having been rent in twain, disappears as such altogether. The original Grant Allen is left to us, stripped of the political mummer's garb in which he had disguised himself; — the genial, clever writer who is always welcome when chatting to us about animals and plants and things which he really does understand, and about which no one can talk more pleasantly or more instructively. By the time you receive this, it will have been announced that Mr. Allen has succeeded in carrying off Mr. Newnes's £1000 prize for the best novel. And a clever, bright story it is. Now, if Mr. Allen wishes to show his gratitude to me for having bundled him out of his ridiculous and untenable political position, the best thing he can do is to devote a portion of his winnings to the support of the upholders of political consistency, — *viz.*, the Socialistic and Anarchistic institutions which have cured him of his dreadful malady. Let him send £100 each to the Fabian Society and the "Personal Rights Journal."

WORDSWORTH DONISTHORPE.

LONDON, DECEMBER 9, 1890.

Woman's Emancipation, and What It Means.

Woman's emancipation means freedom, liberty. It means liberty pure and simple; failing of which, it is, according to its degree, oppression, suppression, tyranny. It means liberty to enter any and all fields of labor, — trade, profession, science, literature, and art, — and liberty to compete for the highest positions in the land. Liberty to choose her companion, and equal liberty to change. Liberty to embrace motherhood in her own way, time, and place, and freedom from the unjustly critical verdict and action of society concerning her movements. She will no longer recognize society's right to condemn in *her* practices condoned in man. No more a slave, she will be a true comrade; independent of man, as he is independent of her, dependent on him, as he is dependent on her. And the sex question will be settled. All this, and more, when woman shall be free, and enjoy an equality of liberty with man.

ORMONDE.

The New Economic Movement in England.

Very! Not very new, but very economic. May I throw a little light on the movement? I see Mr. Yarros is hopeful, while you, Sir, are a trifle pessimistic. The letter of invitation which I, in common with many others, received from Prof. Marshall, is dated October 24, 1890, and begins thus: "Dear Sir — I have been requested to invite you to attend a private meeting at University College, London, on Thursday, November 20, to discuss proposals for the foundation of an economic society or association, and, in conjunction therewith, of an Economic Journal, and to take action thereon. The chair will be taken by the Rt. Hon. the Chancellor of the Exchequer at 5 o'clock."

You have doubtless observed that when you receive a letter from a lady with a postscript to it, it is needless to wade through the letter. Attend to the postscript, and all will be well. However, I attended the meeting. I found a printed note on my chair stating that the Association was all bogus, that it was merely put forward as a bait to lure people together, and that the real object of the promoters was to get up a collection to enable them to run a paper at other people's expense and for their own glory. Of course, these are not the words of the promoters, but only the gist of what, when read between the lines, their note explained. It was thought, after maturer reflection, we were told, that a learned society of the usual pattern was still premature, in the present state of economic science, etc., etc. Presently it transpired that President, Committee of Management, Editor and Staff were all in Prof. Marshall's pocket, and furthermore, that they consisted of a body of gentlemen ("interested in political economy") known in this country as the Economic Mutual Admiration Society. Everything was cut and dried. Objectors and captious critics were coughed down or ruled out of order. Mr. Howell, M.P., who wanted to know *why* the proposed society had vanished into thin air, was told to exercise patience, and perhaps the society would grow out of the journal later on. The only objector who would not be coughed down (though the Secretary held up both his hands and howled at the top of his voice) was Mr. Bernard Shaw, who moved as an amendment that Mr. Goschen should *not* be President. Probably most people agreed with Mr. Shaw, but nobody dared to say so, and the amendment would have gone unseconded but for the customary tact and grace of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who, in a neat speech, signed the warrant for his own deposition, so to speak, by seconding the motion. Finding that Mr. Giffen, of the Board of Trade, next to whom I was sitting, was unable to explain the sudden collapse of the society scheme, I walked across to Prof. Sidgwick and asked him point-blank whether the Cambridge men demurred to supporting an institution which would be chiefly frequented by Londoners, and he replied that that consideration might have had some weight with the promoters. So it might.

The long and short of the shabby little business is that certain worthy writers of a particular economic school want to run a paper to air their own views without incurring the usual expense and running the usual risk. If successful, they will have done a smart stroke of business on a small scale.

Yours, etc.,

UNORTHODOX.

P. S.—The "Times" article was written by one of the promoters.

Liberty.

Issued Fortnightly at One Dollar a Year; Single Copies Five Cents.

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Office of Publication, 45 Milk Street, Room 7.
Post Office Address: LIBERTY, P. O. Box No. 3366, Boston, Mass.

Entered as Second Class Mail Matter

BOSTON MASS., JANUARY 24, 1891.

"In abolishing rent and interest, the last vestiges of old-time slavery, the Revolution abolishes at one stroke the sword of the executioner, the seal of the magistrate, the club of the policeman, the gauge of the excisemen, the erasing-knife of the department clerk, all those insignia of politics, which young Liberty grinds beneath her heel." — PROUDHON.

☞ The appearance in the editorial column of articles over other signatures than the editor's initial indicates that the editor approves their central purpose and general tenor, though he does not hold himself responsible for every phrase or word. But the appearance in other parts of the paper of articles by the same or other writers by no means indicates that he disapproves them in any respect, such disposition of them being governed largely by motives of convenience.

Mr. Pentecost and His Critics.

In Mr. Pentecost's address on "Three Years of Freedom," delivered Sunday, January 4, I find the following remarks:

When this platform was established, I determined that it should never be dominated by any religious, political, social, secular, or other organization; that it should never pronounce the shibboleth of any sect on earth.

The tendency of all "movements" is to become sects, and of all writers and speakers to become the mere advocates of some sectarian presentation of truth. . . . I have been subjected to considerable criticism in the infinitesimal world that knows or cares anything about me. Some of this I have, no doubt, deserved on account of my general limitations, but a great deal of it has come simply and solely because I would not be guided against my honest convictions by particular persons who wished me to preach their hobbies, or because I would not join some sect and do my work in the spirit that characterizes and for the purposes contemplated by that sect or party.

Every sect or party has its leaders and its language. If a man will submit to those leaders and talk that language he will be petted and praised by the members of that sect, and used for all they can get out of him as long as he is submissive and obedient. But if he will not wear the iron collar of the leaders and insists on using a language of his own, they have no use for him and can see very little good in him. . . . There are all sorts of heterodox churches, and all sorts of heterodox political parties or organizations for social reform, and all these little sects or parties are in principle exactly like the large and controlling sects. They are all persecuted as much as they can be by the larger sects, and they all persecute each other as much as they can. And all of them, large and small, turn against the person who remains outside of them all.

I have made a careful study of all these sects, and have found that they are all alike in principle, that they are all actuated by the same kind of spirit. I have found that the sectarian person can see little good in any sect but his own, and that he is usually willing, to the extent of his power, to destroy all who will not submit to his party. . . . I believe that sectarian Republicans and Democrats, if they had the power, would by physical force rid the country of Socialists, Anarchists, Knights of Labor, and perhaps of each other. And I know Socialists, Anarchists, and perhaps Knights of Labor, who, if they had the power, would by physical force rid the country of Republicans and Democrats and each other.

I have more sympathy with the doctrines of the Knights of Labor and Socialists and Anarchists than I have with the doctrines of the Republicans or Democrats, but I would no more think of joining a Knights of Labor or Socialist or Anarchist party than I would of joining the Republican or Democratic party. . . .

For these reasons the utterances from this platform are criticised more than they always deserve to be. . . . Few social and political conservatives like them because they are sympathetic with the social and political heretics. Few organized labor men or Socialists or Anarchists or Single-Taxers like them because they are not dictated by the leaders or characterized by the catch-words of any of these sects.

When Mr. Pentecost was an orthodox and pious member of the Christian Church he believed that the cunning and wicked devil was always busily engaged in plots to steal his soul and make him a candidate for hell. Now Mr. Pentecost seems to be a victim of the delusion that devils in human shape are plotting to steal his liberty and make him a slave of some base and conspiring "Leader" of a despicable sect. Mr. Pentecost's condition would strike me as melancholy did it not appear so ludicrous. Granted that in a figurative sense Mr. Pentecost's remarks apply to such reformers as well as non-reformers as favor force and address themselves to men's passions, superstitions, and narrow interests, what foundation, — nay, what shadow of foundation, — is there for his charge against Anarchists? What are the facts, what are the fancies, that justify Mr. Pentecost's language in that connection? Will he be good enough, will he have the fairness, to furnish a scrap of evidence that Anarchists do not like his addresses "because they are not dictated by (their) leaders or characterized by (their) catch-words"? Will he have the kindness to mention one or two of the Anarchistic catch-words? Will he give us a hint as to the identity of the "leaders" who have no use for him "because he declines to wear the iron collar" and insists on using a language of his own? Will he, in short, offer proof of his accusations, so far as the Anarchists are concerned?

No, he will not, because he cannot. He talks "on general principles," considering evidence a needless luxury. Of this I am sure. I know, in the first place, that there are no facts on which to base such a charge as Mr. Pentecost brings. I know well the Anarchistic world and those from whom the "considerable criticism" of which Mr. Pentecost has been the subject came. In fact, a considerable part of this considerable criticism has come from Liberty's office. So far as these critics are concerned, the talk of iron collar, catch-words, sectarian spirit, etc., is absurd and unjust. They find fault with Mr. Pentecost, because he appears to them illogical, inconsistent, hasty, and unsound. They may be wrong, and Mr. Pentecost may be more profound and philosophical than they think. But nobody is more willing to be convinced of this than they are. Mr. Pentecost's usual answer to their criticisms is — silence. Now and then he takes his revenge in referring to them in his addresses in uncomplimentary language. It is high time to protest against this policy and render it ineffective.

But, will the reader naturally object, if Mr. Pentecost is so unfair and unjust in his accusations, how are we to account for this unfairness? We have always honored him for qualities utterly incompatible with such reprehensible conduct; he has always impressed us as absolutely truthful and sincere. No doubt he strives to be, I answer. The purity of his intentions and motives I would not question. But, as I have hinted, he often indulges in vague talk "on general principles." He is misled by a peculiar philosophy, which frees him from the paltry obligations commonly accepted and respected. Having satisfied himself (and it sometimes takes very little to satisfy Mr. Pentecost) that "the tendency of all movements is to become sects," and of all writers and speakers to insist upon submission to their creed and repetition of their catch-words, Mr. Pentecost holds himself excused from proving particular charges against particular movements. Anarchism is a "movement," *ergo* it is corrupt and bad. Then Mr. Pentecost's unscientific treatment of sociological questions, or rather his tacit assumption that sociological matters are not to be treated after the scientific fashion, is largely contributory to his lamentable practical failure as a guide and supporter of a radical doctrine, and to his totally unfair treatment and misunderstanding of those who point out his errors.

Read, for instance, this passage, of which Helen Gardener herself might be proud:

No sect will ever finally prevail. Truth is larger than any creed which any man or set of men or any age can make. It can only be discovered as the human mind is prepared to receive it. No party has it. No sect ever can have it. It is evolved by the processes of the ages, and he is wise who ties himself to no distinct school of thought, but holds himself open to the truth, let it spring whence and lead whither it may.

What a sad mixture of sense and nonsense, of truth and absurdity! That a thoughtful man will hold himself open to the truth and be just to every school and system, is a truism. But suppose a man comes to the conclusion that this or that system or theory is the correct, the scientific system or theory. Is it improper for him to avow his belief and defend it? Is it improper for him to call that system by the name which it happens to have? If Mr. Pentecost believes in Anarchism, what rational objection can he have against declaring himself an Anarchist? If he calls a spade a spade, a shoe a shoe, and a book a book, and cannot escape the necessity of naming things under which unfortunate humanity lives and moves, what singular superstition seals his lips when approaching social movements and principles? Manifestly there is nothing *but* a superstition behind this incomprehensible dread of words. Surely Mr. Pentecost cannot mean that a wise man will refrain from all attempts at generalizing experience and forming conclusions. In the first place, he himself is not afraid of positive expressions of opinion in approval or disapproval of things. In the second place, there is certainly no reason for constituting social facts an exception to facts in general. If there is such a thing as science, there must and will be such a thing as social science. More: there *is* such a thing as social science ready for those who know how to study it. A science has its laws and its principles. A science accounts for phenomena and furnishes rules of practical action. Mr. Pentecost will not deny that the proper course for men is to study the social science and govern their conduct, individual and collective, by the laws of the science. If the science declares for liberty, the wise man will not hurrah for prohibition; if the science teaches equity, the wise man will not sympathize with clear violations of it. The only thing, therefore, that Mr. Pentecost can and does deny is the propriety of naming certain things. He fights words, and is afraid of terms and definitions. And because we do not fight words, but regard them as useful and even indispensable, Mr. Pentecost accuses us of conspiring against his liberty, peace, and spiritual life. Because we ridicule what we deem a puerile notion of his, he describes us as intolerant and tyrannical. Seeing that Mr. Pentecost is led to commit serious offences by his inveterate and unreasoning hatred of certain innocent terms, an effort to recall him to the obligations and responsibilities attendant upon his functions cannot be altogether inopportune or unprofitable.

V. Y.

"Today's" Conversion.

It is not without pleasure that I rise to announce "Today's" conversion to Anarchism. Not that "Today" has frankly and humbly surrendered; no, it still feigns complete unconsciousness of the total collapse of its position, — a collapse which its own hands helped to bring about, — but I am confident that others will see matters in their true light, and therefore see fit to make the announcement. In a recent editorial, replying to a correspondent who claimed superiority for Anarchism in that it does not, like Individualism, attempt to coerce and restrain the fit in favor of the unfit, the editor argues as follows:

The criterion suggested, namely, which of the two courses tends most to further survival of the society? must be regarded as the fundamental one. Now, in a military contest between two nations there can be little doubt that, other things equal, the nation which acts most completely as a unit will be the one to survive. . . . The very extensive experience which the world has had in war shows that an army can be held together by inflicting very severe punishment for desertion, while an army in which desertion was permitted would suffer greatly from the practice. Similarly, the army must be supported — if fighting on its own territory, wholly, and if on foreign territory, partly — by the rest of the nation; and in an extreme case it may be necessary to coerce a large part of the nation into contributing. An army dependent for its subsistence upon voluntary contributions would be in a precarious position. If, then, our correspondent's criterion as to what is justifiable be adopted, there seems no escape from the conclusion that, in so far as the activities of a nation are militant, a considerable degree of coercion is absolutely essential. If the nature of men were different, if there were a much greater repugnance to submitting to coercion, any attempt at exercising coercion would defeat its own ends by reason of the resistance which it would excite. It may be that in the future the nature of men will be so changed that any considerable amount of coercion will be impracticable. . . . . But in order that the

nature of men may change it is necessary that their pursuits change. There is, in the course of time, an adaptation established between feelings and activities, and as long as war continues to be one of the chief occupations of men the readiness to submit to coercion, which is essential to carrying on war, will continue. It may be said that war is no longer the chief business with civilized nations, that men's occupations have changed earlier than their natures; and this is true. But the change of nature will follow; that is, provided that the new occupations are such as do not require submission to coercion for carrying them on successfully.

Now, can the reader discover in this argument a single *objection* to Anarchism? Considering that nobody has ever claimed that Anarchism is anything but an ideal of a social state to be gradually approached; that the Anarchists have always emphasized the necessity of the "change of pursuits" on the part of men, to which end economic reforms calculated to extend and strengthen industrialism and weaken all the elements unfavorable to it have been advocated persistently and vigorously; that they have always held it of prime importance to disseminate sound views of social organization and correct conceptions of freedom, thereby inspiring love of liberty and opposition to coercion in all its overt and covert forms, — considering all this, "Today's" remarks, if regarded as criticisms of Anarchism, appear singularly misapplied and uncalled for. To say that Anarchism is bad because the people are not ready for it, — do not appreciate liberty enough or hate tyranny enough, — which is what "Today's" remarks amount to, — is not an objection *against* Anarchism, but a plea for education *in* Anarchism.

"Anarchism is just, sound, and desirable," say the Anarchists. "But the people do not show an appreciation of liberty, do not resist invasion, and lack an understanding of social principles," objects "Today," and adds: "They allow government to engage in improper wars; they do not resent injustice; and, if the society is not to perish, they must be coerced and drilled to the extent required by the conditions of military success." "True," rejoin the Anarchists, "we know all this, and it is our intention to enlighten the people and by gradual judicious measures to remove all these difficulties. Have you any *other* objections; can you allege anything against the soundness, justice, and desirability of Anarchism?" Silence on the part of "Today"; no other objection is forthcoming. Must we not conclude that it is converted?

V. Y.

The "General Principle" and Copyright.

I am astonished at the weakness and shadowiness of Mr. Tucker's arguments in support of what he insists is the Anarchistic view of copyright, and, returning to the subject, I will proceed to state my grounds for disputing Mr. Tucker's position and holding it inconsistent with the fundamental principles of Anarchism.

Mr. Tucker and I believe in the principle of equal liberty, and we believe in private property, which is a corollary from the principle of equal liberty. We believe that the laborer is entitled to his full product. Now, in my opinion, "a man's right to the produce of his brain is equally valid with the right to the produce of his hands." I wish it distinctly understood that, far from regarding (with Mr. Tucker) George's argument against patent rights as "conclusive, unanswerable," I regard it as too silly to be deserving of notice. The metaphysical talk about the potential existence of ideas and their being "there to be found" is to me meaningless jargon. (1) *My* reasons for opposing absolute right of property in inventions are totally different. I take substantially the Spencerian view of the subject, diverging from Spencer only in holding that labor expended on *how* to state an idea is labor of production and not labor of discovery, in which opinion I happen to coincide with George, much to my discomfort. I find no attempt in Mr. Tucker's reply to prove that he is correct in holding that the method of expressing an idea is itself an idea, and though I am not now able to prove that it is not, yet my very strong impression to that effect cannot be overcome by the mere assertion of the opposite view. I admit that Mr. Tucker was right in his criticism of George, for therein he took George's own test and triumphantly showed it to establish that what George arbitrarily chose to constitute an exception was really no exception at all. When, however, Mr. Tucker will bear in mind that I decline to subject my position to the Georgian test, he will certainly appreciate the necessity of furnishing some other proof of his proposition. (2)

I have referred to the Spencerian view of a man's right to the produce of his brain. Now, what is that view? We will listen to Spencer. "It is tolerably self-evident that no violation of the law of equal freedom is committed in the acquisition of knowledge — that knowledge, at least, which is open to all. A man may read, hear, and observe to as great an extent as he pleases, without in the least diminishing the liberty of others to do the like — in fact, without affecting the condition of others in any way. It is clear, too, that the knowledge thus obtained may be digested, reorganized, or combined afresh, and new knowledge educed from it by its possessor, without the rights of his fellows being thereby trespassed upon. (3) And it is further manifest that the moral law permits a man who has by his intellectual labor obtained such new knowledge to keep it for his own exclusive use or claim it as his private property. (4) He who does this in no degree exceeds the prescribed limits of individual freedom. He abridges no one's liberty of action. Every other person retains as much scope for thought and deed as before. And each is free to acquire the same facts — to elaborate from them, *if he can*, the same new ideas — and in a similar manner employ those new ideas for his private advantage. (5) Seeing, therefore, that a man may claim the exclusive use of his original ideas without overstepping the boundaries of equal freedom, it follows that he has a *right* so to claim them; or, in other words, such ideas are his property."

At first sight this view seems to imply the right of perpetual property in ideas. But, as Spencer goes on to say, "in consequence of the probability, or perhaps we may say the certainty, that the causes leading to the evolution of a new idea in our mind will eventually produce a like result in some other mind, the claim above set forth must not be admitted without limitation. Many have remarked the tendency that exists for an important invention or discovery to be made by independent investigators nearly at the same time. There is nothing really mysterious in this. A certain state of knowledge, a recent advancement in science, the occurrence of some new social want — these form the conditions under which minds of similar character are stimulated to like trains of thought, ending, as they are prone to do, in the same result. Such being the fact, there arises a qualification to the right of property in ideas, which it seems difficult, and often impossible, to specify definitely. The laws of patent and copyright express this qualification by confining the inventor's or author's privilege within a certain term of years. But in what way the length of that term may be found with correctness there is no saying. In the meantime, as already pointed out, such a difficulty does not in the least militate against the right itself." (6)

I beg to call Mr. Tucker's attention to this qualification and the reason given for its introduction. He will realize his error in excluding discussion of "degrees of probability or possibility in this connection." The exclusion can only make matters worse for him, for, so far as the "general principle" is concerned, property in ideas cannot be denied without challenging the right to property in the produce of one's hands. If we are to follow the general principle and refuse to qualify it according as the discussion of degrees of probability or possibility directs and prompts, then we are bound to declare, not *against* patent right and copyright, but in favor of absolute property in ideas. It is only the difficulties in the practical application of the general principle that necessitate the abridgment and limitation of the right of property in this particular sphere. It is only because "many have remarked the tendency that exists for an important invention or discovery to be made by independent investigators nearly at the same time," that "there arises a qualification to the right of property in ideas" and that I am able to echo Mr. Tucker's declaration in regard to the excessive silliness of those who do believe in the perpetual and unlimited right to property in ideas. Were there no such tendency to take account of, I should certainly favor perpetual monopoly in ideas, seeing that there is no argument against such a monopoly which does not apply equally well to monopoly in things material produced by labor.

And now we come to the point where I diverge from the Spencerian position. Spencer makes no distinction between the right to property in inventions and the right to literary property, while I do. Spencer evidently agrees with Mr. Tucker that literary expression belongs to the category of ideas, while I am strongly inclined to think that the "how to say" a thing is labor of production. But whether I am right in *this* or not, I am certainly right in claiming that there is no tendency for any form of literary expression to be produced by independent writers. To repeat the words already used by me, "it would be absurd to say that 'some man or men might, and in many cases very probably would, have (written) tomorrow' what Spencer has written today. Instead of being 'very probable,' it is simply beyond all possibility. If Spencer had not been born, it is probable that some other man or men would by this time have discovered the ideas and truths with which his name is identified; but the world would never have had Spencer's books. The method, the style, the manner, the peculiarities of all kinds due to his physical, mental, and moral traits, these no other man might or would under any circumstances bring. . . . Since men began to write, no such occurrence has taken place as the production of two similar quatrains, or two ten-line paragraphs, by two independent men. The writings of no two men are ever alike; because no two men are mentally and morally alike, although hundreds of men hold common beliefs and have thoughts and emotions in common." I can discover no reason for qualifying an author's absolute right to his literary property, the practical difficulties that embarrass us in the case of inventors being here conspicuous by their absence. Mr. Tucker's remarks upon this point fail of effect. In the first place, it is not true that I am obliged to maintain "logical, inherent, intrinsic impossibility" of "rediscovery of literary expression." All I need maintain is practical improbability, since, the general principle being on my side, the burden of proof is on those who argue for a limitation and abridgment of the right deducible from the principle. The principle of private property, as Mr. Tucker says, is already discovered. Does the experience of men present any lesson showing the necessity of limiting and qualifying an author's right to his literary property? Certainly not. Then we should adhere to the general principle and insist on *unlimited* right. Perhaps future experience *will* show the need and justice of qualification; if so, future humanity will doubtless provide for the proper adjustment of the difficulties. But *we* have no justification whatever for breach of that general principle in which we pretend to believe.

But it is not even true that Mr. Tucker has "disposed" of my claim of logical impossibility. He has simply (to my surprise) evaded my point. I contended that literary form depends on all kinds of physical, mental, and moral traits, and that the writings of no two men are ever alike because no two men are mentally and morally alike; and if this is true (which, I expect, will be generally admitted), then not only does not "the addition of intellect" (and moral nature) "vastly *increase* the possibility" of reproduction or rediscovery of literary expression, but it does not even leave us the possibility afforded by chance to allow for. That addition makes that impossible which is not impossible when type is thrown into the air. (7)

I will say in conclusion that I agree with Mr. Tucker that it would be much better if art and literature could be entirely divorced from commerce, and that I look forward to a time when absolute communism shall prevail in this particular sphere; but the question is not what the remote future is likely to bring, but what the principles we recognize and advocate logically lead to or end in. What we hope for is one thing; what we are bound to defend as Anarchists — that is, champions of equal liberty — is another thing.

V. Y.

One remarkable feature of the above article is the number of things that *are not* said in it. I cannot recount them here; but I wish that every reader would turn back to Liberty of December 27, examine Mr. Yarros's first article and my reply in connection with his present rejoinder, and note the points and considerations which he thought it worth while to advance and which I thought it worth while to refute, and which are now entirely neglected. Letting these pass, I proceed to examine the things that *are* said.

(1) Yet further down Mr. Yarros declares that the principle of private property is already *discovered*. Now, that principle is an idea. How could that idea have been discovered if it had not existed before discovery? But to say that it so existed — that is, that it was "there to be found" — is to Mr. Yarros "meaningless jargon." Ideas and principles, to be sure, being qualities and relations, have no *material* existence; yet we constantly speak of them, and with propriety, as existent. No man produces them. They were (most of them) before man was. That a straight line is the shortest distance between two points was as true before the discovery of the rudiments of geometry as afterward. If this is meaningless jargon to Mr. Yarros, I can only say it is fortunate that it is highly improbable (though not, as he claims, entirely impossible) that there will ever be many men with mental constitutions exactly like his own.

(2) If I understand Mr. Yarros here, his claim is that there is work of production as distinguished from work of discovery, and that, if he should adopt George's test of distinction between them, — namely, that work of discovery is or may be done once for all, while work of production is required afresh in the case of each particular thing, — my argument would be valid against him; but that, since he does not adopt George's test, my argument, valid against George, is invalid against him. I confess that it did not occur to me that Mr. Yarros might see a distinction between work of discovery and work of production essentially differing from *the* distinction claimed by George, because the latter seemed, and still seems, to me the real distinction. But if it is not, and if Mr. Yarros has the real distinction, then, as he says, my argument against George is not necessarily good against him. Before that can be decided, however, Mr. Yarros's distinction must first be made known, and, so far as I can find, he has nowhere stated it. He emphatically states that the two things, work of pro-

duction and work of discovery, are separate, but as to what separates them he leaves us in utter ignorance. George, on the contrary, states clearly what separates them, and I must accept his distinction until shown a better one. This distinction is my reason, or, at least, one of my reasons (though Mr. Yarros says I have not given any), for holding that the method of expressing an idea is itself an idea. It seems to me an inseparable characteristic of an idea that man's possession of it is necessarily the result of work that is or may be done once for all, and method of expression certainly falls within that category. But even if it should be shown that method of expression is not an idea, the effect upon my position would be verbal rather than substantial, as I should have only to discard the phrase, "no property in ideas," and substitute, "no property in the results of work that is or may be done once for all."

(3) Down to this point the sentences quoted from Spencer are not only, as he says, "tolerably self-evident," but absolutely true, undisputed, and indisputable.

(4) Here is where the link is missing. And here, as I see by the rest of Mr. Yarros's article, is the point where the difference between his position and mine originates. I have not Spencer's book by me, and so am not sure what he means by "the moral law." But from the context quoted I judge that he refers simply to the law of equal freedom. In that case his position is unsound. The law of equal freedom permits a man who has acquired knowledge to keep it secret and to use it secretly; but from that to recognition of it as his private property is a long, long leap. The man may keep the knowledge secret because this secrecy cannot be violated without violating that personality which, by the law of equal freedom, is inviolable. As long as the man maintains this secrecy, he will enjoy certain advantages necessarily involved with it, but when he voluntarily abandons the secrecy, he at the same time abandons the advantages. In the sentence which I am now criticising, a false inference is declared "manifest," without any logical process; the whole question is begged right here at the start.

(5) Supposing no patent or copyright, this is true. The man who uses his knowledge secretly abridges no one's liberty of action; and that is why the law of equal freedom permits him to do so. But from the moment a patent or copyright is granted, no other man is "free to acquire the same facts — to elaborate from them, if he can, the same new ideas — and in a similar manner employ those new ideas for his private advantage"; and that is why the law of equal freedom forbids copyrights and patents. Leaving out the last sentence of the first paragraph quoted from Spencer, and the clause in the middle, "or claim it as his private property," I could hardly ask anything better than Spencer's words as premises for my own conclusions. As for his conclusions from them in the sentences to which I except, they are fallacious, not to say arbitrary. They precisely fit Webster's definition of a fallacy as "an argument, or apparent argument, which professes to be decisive of the matter at issue, while in reality it is not." Of course, then, all the conclusions which Mr. Yarros further draws from the "general principle" as laid down by Spencer have no force as addressed to me, until he shall show that I am wrong in the criticism which I have just made on Spencer's view. My reasons for claiming that the general principle is on my side and against property in ideas must first be overthrown, or else the burden of proof remains on Mr. Yarros to show the logical, inherent, intrinsic impossibility of rediscovery of literary expression. I have no call to give reasons for the abridgment of a right which I deny altogether. Nor do I see how my denial of this right, as I deduce it from the law of equal liberty, at all involves a denial of the right of property in general. This is another point that must be demonstrated before I will admit it.

(6) It is obviously contradictory and absurd to first justify property in ideas on the ground that it *does not* abridge others' liberty of action, and then, on the ground that it *does* abridge others' liberty of action, to qualify it in such a way that the abridgment in each particular case shall be limited to a term of years. Such a qualification of property in ideas is a denial of property in ideas. It is an admission that such property does abridge others' liberty of action, and therefore is inconsistent with the law of equal liberty, and therefore is untenable by Anarchists.

(7) Mr. Yarros allows that chance considered alone admits a possibility of reproduction of literary expression, but curiously claims that the addition of intellect to chance removes this possibility. I claim, on the other hand, that such addition vastly increases this possibility, and for this reason: intellect eliminates from the possible combinations of letters and words certainly more than ninety-nine per cent. of them, as less than one per cent. of them form sentences sufficiently intelligible to be written outside the lunatic asylums. After this tremendous elimination, the law of chances still governs the relatively small remainder, for men are the product of conditions, and chance enters into the conditions that produce men just as it enters into other things. I deny the logical impossibility of two men being exactly alike, and I even assert a considerable possibility of two men being sufficiently alike to write substantially the same book. I myself have known men so closely resembling each other that only after long and intimate acquaintance could I tell them apart, and then not readily; and this resemblance was not physical simply, but extended in the same degree to mental traits, habits of thought, tastes, aptitudes, the sound of the voice, and methods of speech. I should have been more surprised to see these two men, writing independently, produce books widely different than books substantially alike. Mr. Yarros should remember that literal reproduction is not necessary to constitute violation of copyright. Substantial similarity is sufficient, and such similarity is not only possible, but, I am confident, has not infrequently occurred. I know that in music it has often occurred. The experts even claim that musical combinations, multitudinous as they are, are already well-nigh exhausted, and that the time is fast approaching when it will be impossible to write a new musical phrase. It would have been stupid in me to evade when facts and common sense are arrayed thus strongly on my side. But I am none the less sorry that Mr. Yarros should suppose me capable of evasion in any case. To me evasion is not only dishonesty, but dishonesty in its most revolting form. I know nothing more despicable than that pride of intellect which leads a man, professing only anxiety for the truth, to give error the appearance of truth in order to avoid the supposed humiliation of defeat. Pending further evidence, I refuse to believe that Mr. Yarros attributes this quality to me. And yet I cannot understand his use of the word "evaded," when I know that evasion makes upon him the same impression of intellectual dishonesty that it makes upon me. T.

Property in Ideas.

To the Editor of Liberty:

In a letter I sent you for publication, but which was too late for insertion, I made substantially the same points as Mr. Yarros against your copyright argument. As I am not yet convinced, I take your answer to Yarros as covering all my difficulties, and I maintain that copyright is not a grant of monopoly to ideas, but that it is a property right to the method of working out or actualizing an idea. But, as you say that the way of working out an idea — as in literary matters — or of actualizing it — as in a mechanical device — is itself an idea, and comes under the general law of no property in ideas, I will take it at that, and ask: Why no property in ideas? Surely I have a right to my own ideas. True, it may be difficult to prove that the idea is solely mine, and that no other human being could create such an idea. Your idea seems to be that ideas are like objective realities, — pearls or planets, for instance, — and that the discovering them is only an accident of time or place and person; that, being latent or hidden away, a man discovers an idea as he discovers a gold mine. I maintain that ideas are created, or invented, and, having created or invented them, I have as much right to my ideas as to my hat, whether I wear it in public or in private, and under equity I should be protected in the possession of them. To prove, though, that an idea is mine exclusively, I have to prove that another idea, so similar to mine that it is impossible to distinguish them, was not created by the claimant, but was copied from mine. How am I to do that?

You say that to discuss degrees of possibility or probability is to shoot wide of the mark, and that the question has to be decided in accordance with some general principle. But if the general principle is no property in ideas, then that principle needs establishing, and you have not convinced me of that. The degree of possibility or probability seems to me quite pertinent. I don't think that a believer in literary property should be called upon to prove the logical, inherent, intrinsic impossibility that his work can be any other than his; it is enough to prove the more relative proposition that is highly improbable and, according to the law of chance, almost impossible, that the work originated with anybody else. If a man has to maintain the abstract proposition of the logical impossibility of a counter proposition, then he can hold no property of any kind, or reclaim any property that had been stolen from him. I could steal Millet's "Angelus," and, if caught in possession of it, could challenge the owner to prove the logical impossibility of my having painted it myself, and all the experts in the world could not gainsay me. I believe logicians have failed to disprove the logical impossibility of a hare overtaking a tortoise if the tortoise gets a slight start; and, as an abstract matter, we can logically prove nothing, — not even our own existence. Certain it is that many fundamental assumptions of science cannot logically be proven, yet we speak of scientific truth.

But if I have to prove the relative improbability of an idea being original in another, — using the word idea as you have used it, — and if I can succeed in doing so, I fail to see where I violate the equal rights of another in my being protected in possession of what is mine and never was another's.

If I adorn and improve my piece of vacant land in such a fashion as could not have occurred to any other human being, it seems to me that no injustice is done to another who would like to copy my idea, that he be compelled to seek my permission. It is not enough for the pirate to fall back on the abstract proposition of the intrinsic, inherent possibility of the idea being his; he must meet me on common ground and prove that there is nothing highly improbable in his creating the idea independent of me, before he can assert his equal right to the adornment. In the matter of patents the originality of an idea is impossible to prove. The history of inventions proves this, and the patent law is unjust in that it grants patents on account of priority of invention and does not even trouble itself as to originality. But in the matter of copyright the thing is entirely different. As Mr. Yarros says, no two men ever wrote a poem or an essay exactly alike. Some bold plagiarists have been detected, but the idea of falling back on the logical possibility of the work being their own has never to my knowledge been taken. There is presumptive evidence that George got the plan of his work from Patrick Dove; had George transcribed ever so short a chapter complete, even his most ardent friend could have no doubt of George's dishonesty.

I see no distinction worth noting between the public exhibition of literary property and private exhibition of the same. According to that theory, if a thief surreptitiously entered Spencer's study and copied one of his books and sold it to a publisher as original, Spencer would have no redress but to prosecute the intruder — if he could find him — for trespass.

Of course I am not committed to present copyright laws by believing in literary property. And as to the practical results, whether literary property would be sold at cost or not, etc., that is a separate question.

Yours, etc., A. H. Simpson.

The matter of the discovery of ideas and much else that Mr. Simpson touches upon is answered in my comments on Mr. Yarros's article in this issue, and it would be a waste to go over the same ground twice. Still, there are a few points that need separate attention. In discussing the propriety of considering degrees of probability, Mr. Simpson fails to distinguish between the weighing of evidence and the framing of laws. The question of probability rightly enters into the former, but not into the latter. A man on trial for stealing the "Angelus," should he make the defence supposed by Mr. Simpson, would have his evidence weighed against the opposing evidence as a question of fact, but if the law against theft were so framed as to deprive him of the right to make such defence, it would be a very unjust law. Now that is precisely what the law of copyright does. It denies in advance the possibility that the so-called pirate could have accomplished the work independently, and, worse still, declares that, whether he did or not, he is in either case a pirate in the eyes of the law, against whom the owner of the copyright must be protected.

Again: the admitted uncertainty of human knowledge does not deprive us of a basis for the classification of such knowledge as we have. One category of such knowledge is the logically certain. The fundamental propositions of mathematics may be untrue, but, so far as we can see, there is no logical escape from the demonstration of a problem in Euclid. But if any one were to affirm that, because it has been observed that in foggy weather the number of suicides

tends to increase, there would necessarily be more suicides during the fog of today than there were during the sunshine of yesterday, we should answer him that it was simply a matter of probability, with no logical necessity about it. No amount of sceptical philosophy (though I, who say it, am a sceptic) can wipe out this practical distinction between the logically certain and the merely probable.

Again: there is no issue between the pirate and Mr. Simpson. The issue is between the people and Mr. Simpson. No pirate has appeared. But Mr. Simpson says to the people: "I have an idea, and I am afraid some pirate will steal it. Will you not make a law to stop any such act?" The people answer: "Such an act might deprive one of us from getting any benefit from the idea if he should discover it independently, and would in any event compel us to pay you for the idea nine-tenths of whatever benefit it may prove to us. You must at least show us that it would be impossible for any one else to ever discover it." "But how am I to do that?" piteously asks Mr. Simpson. And the hard-hearted people answer: "That's none of our concern; we can't be expected to cut ourselves off for all time from the benefits of a fact of nature simply to give you a security against competition which no other laborers enjoy."

Again, and this time finally: the distinction between publication and private expression involves no such consequences as Mr. Simpson supposes. Whatever advantages privacy carries with it must be made good by any one who invades that privacy.

T.

Copyright.

TEMPLE, LONDON, XMAS DAY, 1890.

DEAR SIR, — Having just got outside the roast turkey and plum-pudding which a proper recognition of our Lord's nativity enjoins upon all believers, I find myself in a truly Christian frame of mind, — ready to quarrel with my best friends. I will commence with Liberty. Perhaps I should be justified in any case; for therein I find myself and co-thinkers described in this not very complimentary language: "The position of those who favor a perpetual monopoly of ideas is so excessively silly that against it no force is required." I am in that position. But perhaps you use the word "silly" in its original sense of "secure," "trusting" (whence "simple-minded")? If so, I accept the situation.

First of all, I must admit that the table you furnish of copyright terms in different countries of the world does seem to justify the statement that "the length of the term of copyright in a nation is inversely proportional to the height of its civilization." Similarly, I think, a table might be framed showing that (England excepted) the scale of protective tariffs in a nation is *directly* proportional to the height of its civilization. America, Germany, and France are far ahead of poor Turkey, while some of the African states are absolute free-traders. Hence, — Long live Protection!

I cannot see the use of arguing whether "literary property is a property" or not; because it is or it is not, according as we make it so or not. We might as well argue whether beer is an exciseable liquor or not. The question is: Ought we to make it property? In other words: Should we (the public) be gainers or losers by granting proprietary right in ideas, — perpetual monopoly of ideas? I am in the silly position of thinking we should gain.

Perhaps at some future time, if you think it worth while, I might ask you to let me explain how perpetual copyright and perpetual patent-right would work out. At present I will content myself with referring to a letter signed Wm. Trinkaus, which appears in your issue of December 13, and which strikes me as one of the most profound and suggestive letters I have seen for a long time. It is appropriately entitled "Dynamic Solutions of Natural Monopoly." Some of your readers would like to know whether the hiatus which occurs near the end of the first paragraph is due to want of space or to the excision of matter repugnant to the main principle contended for.

At any given moment it looks dangerous to grant an author a perpetual monopoly in his work, it is true. But let us take a long period. How many books written in the first decade of this century would now be worth a tinker's straw in a publisher's hands? A hundred? And how many fortunes were made during that same period which are still operating like the widow's cruse of oil? Thousands. Who would pay James Watt's successor a royalty on his steam-engine now? Layer upon layer of new thought, fresh ideas, have been laid upon it, till its share of royalties would surely amount to less than a penny a year. (Pardon my use of the word "royalties": I don't know the American for it.) Mill's works are still a valuable property, but the far grander works of Hobbes would not pay for the warehousing. The last edition of them (and a fine one, too) was sold for the *price of waste-paper*.

Yours truly,

WORDSWORTH DONISTHORPE.

Mr. Donisthorpe said not long ago in the "Personal Rights Journal" that he agreed with me in believing in the largest amount of liberty compatible with equality of liberty. Then he believes in equality of liberty. The he believes that we should be gainers by equality of liberty. Then, if patents and copyrights can be shown to be inconsistent with equality of liberty, he will have to believe that we are losers by patents and copyrights. The direct question therefore is, not whether we are gainers or losers by patents and copyrights, but whether patents and copyrights are sanctioned by the law of equal liberty. My arguments on this point have been directed to showing that they are not, and, if Mr. Donisthorpe wishes to meet me, he must do so on this issue. The number of books that retain a permanent market value has nothing to do with the case. I maintain that it is unfair to make people pay a monopoly price even for the few that do. Nor is the question affected by the number and size and permanence of fortunes built up through privileges other than patent and copyright privileges. One monopoly seldom justifies another. I am not arguing that copyright is of all privileges the most evil in its influence, or that there are not other privileges which are much worse in their effects. I am simply arguing that it is a privilege, and ought to be abolished.

Mr. Donisthorpe seems, at first sight, to make a strong point in his comments upon my copyright table. But other questions soon suggest themselves. May not the absence of protective tariffs in some semi-barbarous countries be due to the fact that they have no industries to protect and no hope of any? Nevertheless, the same countries, though having no literature to protect, protect it more stringently than countries having literatures, presumably because they think they are doing a fine thing in standing up for property. This, however, is no more than a suggestion. In fact, my copyright table was little more than that. I offered it as interesting and suggestive rather than convincing. Facts are the most misleading things in the world unless *all* the facts are known in *all* their relations.

I admire Mr. Trinkaus's article as much as Mr. Donisthorpe does, but I do not see how his championship of the dynamical view strengthens the argument for copyright. Mr. Trinkaus, like myself, is opposed to copyright. Regarding the supposed hiatus in his article, I would say that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, the article was printed in the form in which it reached this office, without omission or material alteration.

I certainly hope that Mr. Donisthorpe will favor Liberty with a more extended presentation of his views on patents and copyrights. In fact, he has a standing invitation to occupy all the space he wants in this paper in discussion of any subject that he may choose.

T.

On Wednesday, January 28, I shall publish a volume of essays on social problems by Count Tolstoï under the general title of "Church and State." The first essay in the volume is so severely denunciatory of the powers that be, that, though written several years ago, it has been held in manuscript by the author until now. The present translation is made directly from this manuscript by permission of Tolstoï himself, and its appearance in the United States will be the first publication of the work anywhere. It is a slashing assault upon both Church and State from the standpoint of Christ's teachings. The second essay, "Money," is written to refute the financial theories of the economists and to show that money is a tool used by tyrants for the enslavement of laborers. While the author signally fails to prove that money is of *necessity* such a tool, he shows that it is such now, and that the governments which monopolize its issue are embodiments of the chief superstition that hinders the progress of humanity. The remaining essays are sufficiently explained by their titles, — "Man and Woman: Their Respective Functions," "The Mother," and "A Second Supplement to the Kreutzer Sonata." The book as a whole, like nearly everything that Tolstoï writes, is a strange and interesting mixture of sense and nonsense.

A press dispatch from Topeka, Kansas, announces that Moses Harman, editor of "Lucifer," has been tried on the charge of sending obscene literature (the O'Neill letter) through the mails, found guilty, and sentenced to one year's imprisonment in the Penitentiary. His other case is still pending.

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